Personal Narrative, Educational Research and Multipolar Cosmopolitanism

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1. Introduction

I argue that the current discussion of cosmopolitanism and the cosmopolitan order demonstrates that more attention needs to be paid to the significance of contextual as opposed to generalizable knowledge of education, especially in relation to diversity and injustice within and between regions of the world. This is a familiar, if not uncontroversial, epistemological position in educational research, except that many such arguments ignore the unjust distribution of resources, voice and influence across the post-colonial world. This injustice has been widely discussed in relation to economic and macro-politics but is less often noticed in relation to the global use of educational research in policy and practice. In this article I argue that the use of personal narrative research may be a means for the less resourced, less heard, less influential parts of the world to resist implementing educational policy which is based in research carried out in other contexts, and which may be pernicious in its unintentional effects. It may also be a way of persuading the West to relinquish its modernist hope of overarching universals of propositional and practical knowledge, and acknowledge that the world is not only plural but variously multipolar, a world in which a range of poles exist in tension with the others.

2. Relation to Understandings of Cosmopolitanism

The terminology of the cosmopolitan order – and of cosmopolitanism itself – are much discussed and contested. The term, 'cosmopolitan order' was originally coined by Held, who was proposing a normative model in distinction from the merely descriptive and ambiguous term, 'globalisation' (Held, 1992). He argues for an 'authoritative assembly of all democratic states and societies' (p.34) in which the 'multiple and overlapping networks of power' (p.36), characteristic of current circumstances of economic, political and social global activity, could alter 'the dynamics of resource production and distribution and of rule creation and enforcement' (p.36). He argues that he is not proposing a particular, current model of democracy which is based on an assumption of the nation state, but allowing for contending models to be rethought in relation to local, regional and global processes and structures. However he then goes on to say that such a 'cosmopolitan model of democracy assumes the entrenchment of a cluster of rights, including civil, political, economic and social rights in order to provide shape and limits to democratic decision-making' (p.34). So whatever his protestations, it is clear that he is assuming a bedrock of liberal – rights-based – policy.

Since Held wrote, the literature on cosmopolitanism has burgeoned. Two themes have recurred. They are the conceptual polarities between universalism and difference and between cosmopolitanism from above and from below. Held began the process of critical reassessment of them, in the context of cosmopolitanism. He pointed out that 'globalism and cultural diversity are not simply opposites…the issue is how and in what way cultures are linked and interrelated' (p.37) and that 'the problems of global governance from above cannot be solved by grassroots democracy alone. For the questions have to be posed: which grassroots and which democracy.' (p.38) Held's brief pointers have been vigorously taken up.[1] Resolutions of the former are inevitably related to resolutions of the latter. As Strand (2010a, p.105) says, in summarising contributions to a special issue on cosmopolitanism:

> A vital dilemma is…the tension between an abstract universalism from above versus a concrete moral commitment from below… The dilemma remains unresolved.

One influential commentator has been Appiah (2006, 2006-7). He argues for a cosmopolitan order based less in world government than in 'subsidiarity' and in conversations. As he says, he (2007, p.2381):

> cannot literally converse with the other six billion strangers who inhabit the planet…but a global community of cosmopolitans will want to learn about other ways of life through anthropology, history, novels, music and news stories.

Like Held, his approach is rooted in liberalism, but less a rights-based one than one which draws on Mill's views that each individual should do what they themselves believe to be right; that 'the dignity of each human being resides, in part, in his or her capacity for and right to self-management' (Appiah, 2007, p.2380). Like Appiah, Mouffe argues for a non-relativistic pluralism. However, for her it is human dignity which is key (2008, p.456). This is not based in Western liberal democratic rights, or in an autonomous, non-relational self but rather holds that human dignity is more fundamental. She contrasts those wanting Held's cosmopolitan order with those who are wanting a pluriverse, a

multipolar world order (464). Rather than a single rule by Reason she argues for agonistic coexistence between different regional poles (466).

These themes have been taken up in education in relation to citizenship education, education for social justice and the necessity for universal global ethics underpinning education policy. The debates have generated both light and heat, as is illustrated in the content and the title of symposium, 'Philosophy of Education and the Gigantic Affront of Universalism' in which the issues of universalism, qualified universalism and cultural translation are all placed within the context of addressing social injustice globally and locally (Enslin, Tjiattas and Todd, 2009). Hansen is an example of a theorist who is less interested in the macro-political focus, and instead takes up the theme of cosmopolitanism from below, identifying a strand he calls 'cosmopolitanism from the ground up' (Hansen, 2010, p.4). This strand focuses on the art of living which is rooted in the everyday context and so can only find expression in the local – but not, he is keen to emphasise, in the parochial (Hansen 2010, p.5):

> What characterises cosmopolitanism from the ground up is a fusion, sometimes tenuous and tension-laden, of receptivity to the new and loyalty to the known.

Hansen is also keen to emphasise that this kind of cosmopolitanism (p.5) 'challenges stereotypical views of the cosmopolitan as an elite and rootless standpoint in the world.' In a series of articles, Todd (2007, 2010) argues that simple openness or receptivity will not solve dissonance. Drawing on Mouffe she argues instead for an agonistic cosmopolitics in which democratic discussion based on rights is only one way of dealing with cultural difference, and that other forms of politics (including the wearing of the hijab) must also be part of an agonistic accommodation in living peacefully with dissonance. Papastephanou (2011a, 2011b) criticises what she calls 'culturalism' in Hansen and others as a world view from the West which overlooks the historical, political, postcolonial contexts of multicultural encounters. Rizvi (2009) argues that cosmopolitan learning should be reflexive, by which he means (p.267)

> a critical recognition of our own cultural and political presuppositions, and the epistemic position from which we speak and negotiate difference.

Almost all this work focuses on the implications for classroom practices or educational policies in the West. Moreover some critics have pointed out how far it remains with the interest and interests of the relatively powerful West. As Rizvi (2005, n.p.) says, 'cultural interaction and exchange…occurs within the logic of consumption, under the new global economic conditions'. As Papastephanou says, even if we are on our guard culturally and politically (2011, p.601):

> It is the self that primarily benefits from the intercultural formation and not the Other who might be affected by such formation only by implication.

In this article I want to shift the focus from what should be done in and for Western educational practices to the spread of Western policies and practices to the rest of the world in a variety of ways. These include educational aid and consultancy, Western universities selling degree programmes around the world, and academic publishing of books and Journals. Therefore the focus of interest takes in more than diversity and ethics; it also addresses diversity and knowledge. Some educational knowledge may be of what Austin (1962) called 'moderate size specimens of dry goods' but more is of the social, historical and cultural world. This has largely been constructed and built on a basis of research and practice in the West. It is then used to inform educational practices and policies in aid and consultancy. It is also the basis of international programmes in education. The research basis of equivalent social, historical and cultural knowledge in relatively less powerful countries is much smaller, and much, much harder to access, even for their own citizens.

3. An unjust world of unequal difference

All too often, it is assumed by Westerners that knowledge generated in their own specific contexts is generalizable across all countries and cultures. This assumption has purchase in relation to science, technology and engineering, much of which concern moderate size dry goods. It may also have purchase in relation to much international finance and multinational business. However with regard to educational knowledge of pedagogy and policy, this assumption can carry little credibility. The underlying philosophies, world views, geographical, political, economic and historical contexts are all likely to be significantly different in other places. As Michael Peters has explained in an interview about editing *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, the West now has the obligation to recognise both the post-colonial positionality of indigenous peoples in the world and also the classical traditions of theory and philosophy that belong to other countries like China and India (Peters, 2013).

Western consultants too often assume that what has meaning or efficacy in their own pedagogical and policy contexts is easily translated into any other culture. They also often assume that they themselves are cosmopolitans when they are better described as 'frequent travellers' or cultural tourists. Goetze's interviews with 71 of the civilian staff of a United Nations Mission in Kosovo indicates that their cosmopolitanism is 'politically firmly rooted in the historical and ideological experience of the West' (2013, p.91). For instance, when she asked for their political 'heroes', over 90% mentioned either Mahatma Ghandi or Nelson Mandela and the only other heroes from outside the

first world were Lenin, Guevara, and Atatürk. There is no reason to believe that this perspective would be very different in education, even among those who themselves theorise cosmopolitanism and value openness. Hansen for instance, lists as 'remarkable cosmopolitans' Mohandas Ghandi, Eleanor Roosevelt, Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela (2010, p.4) – a list that fits well with Goetze's findings. Research by Fazal Rizvi and Michael Singh (Rizvi, 2005) indicates that international students in Western institutions of Higher Education take on Western ideas about cosmopolitanism and global citizenship. They interviewed Asian students after they had completed Higher Education studies in Australia. There was disturbing evidence that they conceptualised themselves as transnational or global, insofar as they located themselves as able to operate in a global market. It was clear that Western goods and ideas counted as 'global' for them while their own home localities did not.

As the Palestinian scholar, André Elias Mazawi says, the notions of the knowledge society and of development have to be understood in relation to configurations of power – national, regional and global – over the backdrop of struggles which occur over what is defined as knowledge and what is valued as development (Mazawi, 2008a). Taking the example of knowledge about educational leadership, he points out that (Mazawi, 2008b, 80):

> The uncritical extension to the Arab region of educational leadership models developed in Western societies dismisses vital cultural dimensions of local contexts of conflict and their political and geopolitical underpinnings. This effectively attracts attention away from the core social and political issues that impact schooling in the Arab region. It also constructs educational leadership in ways that operate an ontological and epistemic disjuncture between the experiential realities of educators and the formal ways through which their professional judgements and performance are assessed.

In a thoughtful article reflecting on her years of experience as a Westerner working in the Education sector in Africa, Brigit Brock-Utne explores the issue of the West exporting assumptions about knowledge and education. She draws on the work of Catherine Odora, a Ugandan scholar, who (Brock-Utne, 2002, 76):

> discusses the need for creating a space in contemporary education discourse that is more tolerant, more sensitive to realities *other than* the overwhelming Western one. She finds that discussing indigenous education today compels us to come to terms with the situation in which even the social construction of a people's reality is and has been constantly defined elsewhere. Discussing indigenous education, according to Odora, 'is about asking why the school building is always quadrangled even where the local setting around it has round huts' (Odora, 1994: 62 - italics added by Brock-Utne).

Brock-Utne and Odora also draw attention to oversimplifications and homogenisations found in terms such as 'the developing world' or 'sub-Saharan Africa'. Such oversimplifications distort the facts. Consider three countries: Botswana, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone. They are all in 'the developing world', they are all African; they are all sub-Saharan; and they all use English as a medium of education. But there are immense differences between them. They each have very different histories, particularly in relation to their encounters with Europe and North America: their experiences of wars, conquests, trade, colonialisation and international aid. Their populations live in very different religious and cultural contexts, and they differ hugely in their physical geographies. It should also not be forgotten that there are big differences *within* each of these countries in terms of: languages spoken; cultural practices; living conditions in rural and urban areas; religion; settlement in highlands, lowlands, deserts and forest; and political relationships to the government.

4. Scientism and oversimplification in a diverse world: The example of literacy

In the face of oversimplification and the diversity it conceals, the question arises: what kinds of knowledge are needed in education? Very often policy makers and international aid agencies assume a need for generalizable and universal knowledge: knowledge that applies everywhere, all the time and to everybody – and to easily measurable attributes. This view has been termed scientism, a view that as Smeyers (2010) remarks not only privileges numbers and statistics, but also easily slips from using them to represent one aspect of reality to thinking that they represent reality. This is a view that the world is best understood as composed of measurable entities which can be understood independently of observer, context or political relations. But scientism doesn't even apply to science and certainly not to the social as a whole, as is well documented (e.g. Latour 1987, 2004). There is no doubt that measurement and the resulting statistics are often significant and relevant for policy and practice. To take just the example of literacy rates: it is useful for policy makers to gather statistics about literacy levels among the population. And it may be useful for them to know the percentage of that population who are, for example, girls, or migrants, or who live in the city.

While policy makers need to know these broad similarities, on their own they are not enough to guide policy. Literacy statistics need to be known, but if educational policy makers – or teachers – want to do something about literacy, then they need to know something about the reasons behind the numbers: *why* some students are not literate, and why some sections of the student population (girls, migrants, urban dwellers) are more (or less) literate than others. Equally, teachers need to know much more about the individual and groups of human beings who are their students, before they can decide on the best approach to teaching literacy. So far this paragraph has been written as if 'literacy' was a well understood concept across countries and cultures. If that were true, perhaps there would be only a little

contextualisation needed to augment any generalized knowledge. But the idea of literacy comes laden with cultural, social, economic, historical, religious and political overtones which affect how they are understood in different contexts. The different contexts and understanding mean any statistical model would have to work with an unfeasibly large number of variables.

Some personal experience of mine may help focus the argument I want to make. In what follows I use specific examples to point up some of the complexities in thinking about literacy, resulting from differences and inequalities between and within different countries. In doing so I am also demonstrating the power of the individual, context-dependent, human story to show situations which are not generalizable, but which are instructive.

The first situation I offer comes from Botswana. Botswana, like so many countries, has many peoples in it, including the San peoples (formerly known to much of the world as Bushmen). Imagine the scene. I am visiting a Year 5 class (ages 9 and upward) in a school deep in rural Botswana. It has taken hours to reach it from the nearest small town, driving not on tar but on deep sand. The school is indeed, as Catherine Odoro says, one of the few rectangular buildings in the village. The other one is the small shop and bar. Otherwise the buildings are neat, round houses each set in a fenced compound. The school group of buildings includes the teachers' homes. The teachers live apart from the rest of the village in rectangular government houses. Unlike the villagers who are all San people, they are native speakers of Setswana. The language of education is Setswana and English. About thirty children sit at desks in a room largely bare of educational materials like posters, books, and equipment for specific curriculum activities. I take a photograph of one of the children. It would be hard to tell from the photograph that she is not from the UK. She sits at a desk, in her blue uniform (provided by the government), resting her hand on her cheek, her elbow on her desk, her pencil in her hand, looking down at the exercise book in which she should be writing. Children in primary schools often look like this: writing is difficult.

The next situation I offer is again from a rural primary school, but this time in the USA. I took a photograph when I was there, doing some research with the teacher in a first year class (ages 6-7). The picture shows a corner of this well-stocked classroom of about twenty pupils. A child at the front is sitting at a desk, working at a large sheet of paper, making a story book by drawing and writing. In the background is a large display board decorated with cartoon characters, with speech bubbles coming out of their mouths. Children's work is mounted on the board, under the heading 'Our Wintry Work'. (There was deep snow outside.) Above this is another notice: 'WRITING'. There is also a set of shelves with boxes of writing implements and piles of paper for the children to use.

The third situation comes from the UK. This time I am visiting a city school for pupils with severe or profound learning disabilities. Again I take a photograph, this time of two teenagers. They are learning to make films using video. Many of them communicate much better through visual means than through words or writing. I am there so that they can interview me as part of their project. My photograph shows two young people and a technician standing round the tripod where the video camera is mounted. Later they will learn to edit it and integrate the interview into a longer film.

Each of these situations are ones in which a basic literacy is being taught. All of them are state schools: these students are benefiting from the ordinary policy and practice of their countries. However the differences are immediate, striking and significant. What is the meaning of literacy for the San child? And what literacy policy and pedagogical practices are appropriate for her? She is learning to write in her second or third language; her classroom has a few books, all text books; the displays are posters from the education ministry; her home and village contains very little printed material of any kind and very little electronic equipment either (she will be pleased to get a copy of my photograph); she is unlikely to go on to secondary, let alone tertiary education (though it is possible). In contrast, the six year old children in the USA are learning to write in their first language; the classroom is full of books and other printed material, including text books but also including books and posters for the children simply to enjoy; the children come from homes full of printed material of all kinds, even if their parents are not well-educated, and there is an abundance of electronic devices, including cameras, recorders, mobile phones and computers with internet access. All these children will continue their education at secondary level and most of them at tertiary level too. The teenagers in the UK are different again. They have severe learning disabilities, but are able to achieve a beginning of media literacy, something that is increasingly relevant as electronic communication expands. However they, like the children in the USA, are surrounded by print and books, at school and at home. And they will be very familiar with television, video, films, posters, and photographs. It is likely that in spite of their learning disabilities they will be able to understand a lot about public communications and the uses of verbal and visual literacies.

Literacy statistics hide these significant differences. Indeed even if all the independent variables could be identified there are too many of them for any useful statistics to be generated. With simplistic statistical approaches adding more variables to a correlation increases the correlation, until it is 1.0 when there are the same number of variables, however meaningless, as there are observations. The loss in the degrees of freedom as the number of variables increases makes the results increasingly useless. Specification errors are inevitable: correlation, for example, normally uses hypotheses specifying linear, log or geometric responses – which can be plotted by a line on a graph. However, there are indications from qualitative research that many of the relationships between two variables in education are much more complicated, and when other factors are introduced the interplay becomes very complex indeed. In the case of literacy, research into 'book floods' shows that relevant factors include accessibility, display, quality of book, teacher education, cultural attitudes to teaching and whether or not the students live in a print culture (Elly, Cutting, Mangubhai and Hugo, 1996; Raban, Brown and Scull, 2009).

Further, the different definitions of literacy used in statistics would generate different sets of variables. Commonly used definitions of literacy will give very different results (and imply different strategies) for these children. One

widely used criterion in sub-Saharan Africa, 'the ability to read easily or with difficulty a letter or a newspaper', may be compared with another equally widely used, 'can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his or her everyday life'. (See Aitcheson and Alidou, 2009.) What would those two statements mean to the San child? to the American child? to the British teenagers? The meaning attached to a letter or a newspaper is not the same cross culturally. Even the ability to write a short statement will mean something different to a child in a community where literacy is needed and assumed, and to a child where it is not. So what policy is needed about literacy levels? And how should teachers approach the task of teaching children to read and to use electronic communication?

5. Trustworthy narratives

My narratives are not the products of research. They function in this argument as rhetoric and illustration. I offer them in the hope they have achieved their purpose of drawing attention to the significance of understanding specific contexts in order to interpret information gathered more generally and of how assumptions that are made by Westerners about those contexts may be seriously mistaken. You, the reader, may believe them, but equally you may be sceptical. For me, the story teller, they are part of my own personal knowledge, but I am well aware that they are not presented in a way that would mean that you, the reader, have good reasons to trust them. To take this point further, I may have tried to be strictly faithful to the facts or I may have fictionalised some aspects of the stories, perhaps in order to maintain confidentiality, or to bring together various aspects of the truth as I perceive it.

Personal and experiential knowledge need not remain simply personal. It can be presented as research. As previously argued in Griffiths and Macleod (2008) it is possible to produce trustworthy research-based knowledge of particular contexts. Such research is based in an epistemology of the unique and particular, a phrase I take from the philosopher Cavarero (2002). Just as with an epistemology of the general and universalizable, an epistemology of the unique and particular must have a means of establishing sound, trustworthy knowledge distinguishable from the anecdotes, songs, poems, performances or images used rhetorically. The epistemology of the unique and particular is recognisable as a version of Aristotelian *praxis* read through the lens of Arendt's (1958) related concepts of the *bios politicos* and natality. As Cavarero helpfully puts it, *praxis* is concerned with the 'shared and relational space generated by the words and deeds of a plurality of human beings' (Cavarero, 2002, p.506).[2] *Praxis,* unlike Aristotelian *techne,* requires personal wisdom and understanding. Joseph Dunne has usefully interpreted it as follows:

> [*Praxis*] is conduct in a public space with others in which a person, without ulterior purpose and with a view to no object detachable from himself, acts in such a way as to realise excellences that he has come to appreciate in his community as constitutive of a worthwhile way of life. ... *praxis* required for its regulation a kind of knowledge that was more personal and experiential, more supple and less formulable, than the knowledge conferred by *techne*. (1993, p. 10)

Praxis is created from evidence gathered personally as well as from others, and applied with intelligence, judgement and logic.

The soundness of a claim to knowledge is assessed on the grounds of both truth and validity. Therefore personal narratives used as research need to be demonstrably trustworthy in relation to both. I now briefly consider each in turn.

I begin with truth. In assessing a narrative, judgements about truth are preceded by judgements about truthfulness. Here I am drawing on Bernard Williams' useful distinction between truth and truthfulness (Williams, 2002).[3] He argues that there are two basic virtues associated with truthfulness: accuracy and sincerity. Judging accuracy and sincerity is a matter for judgement, for weighing evidence, for weighing up reasons to trust the teller. It is difficult to do. There are no infallible rules to guide these judgements about truthfulness. However it is a familiar difficulty which we human beings overcome in order simply to carry on living in families, communities and society at large. In ordinary life we listen to and tell stories all the time. We need to judge how far they are accurate and told with sincerity. We know, and indeed expect, them to be partial, self-serving, entertaining, persuasive and to draw on imperfect memories. Judgements are even more difficult in the case of accounts which are fictionalised, sometimes ironic, or which are poetic or visual representations. Again, it is a familiar difficulty. Myths, fables, riddles, humour and images are used the world over to convey truths (e.g. see Bridges, 2003; Sparkes, Nilges, Swan, and Dowling, 2003; Walker and Unterhalter, 2004; Griffiths and Peters, 2012).

Researchers presented with a narrative must make judgements about the truthfulness of the narrator. Of course, they do this at a personal level, producing personal knowledge, but research is public knowledge. Therefore, researchers need both to make their judgements public and also to give an indication of the reasons for the way in which their judgements were reached. A researcher also needs to present the audience with evidence of how stories were produced, with what intended audience, and for what purpose – and with what funding. All of these factors affect judgements of accuracy and sincerity.

I now turn to validity. I begin by emphasising that the validity in question is not the validity of data in science, let alone of scientism, where numeric measurement is a basic tool. Qualitative researchers have suggested a number of different approaches to the issue of validity in research where numeric measurement is not being used, including, for example, rhizomatic validity, crystalline validity, and respondent validation. In Griffiths and Macleod (2008) we developed an account of validity which starts from older uses of the term: the 'ordinary language' understanding which does not require either measurement or certainty. It is the responsibility of researchers to present research in such a way

that judgements can be made about its validity by their audiences. To enable this, sound research needs to show that the researcher has taken account of representativeness, bias and the possibility of reframing the question. Sometimes a narrative is significant because it reflects a common situation, and sometimes it is significant precisely because it reflects an unusual one. It is important to know which is being claimed and why. Research is also distinguished from anecdote or polemic by attention to representation, genre and literary quality: the way that a personal narrative is presented.[4] The researcher should try to clarify what kinds of reflective and reflexive choices and judgements were made about, for instance, the medium used to present it, any fictions used, and the literary decisions about chronology, hero narratives, etc. Researchers need to set their judgments within their understanding of the cultural, social, political and personal contexts.

Personal narrative and stories use an epistemology of the unique and the particular. The knowledge that they generate is not the same as knowledge that comes from epistemologies of the general and universal. There are no timeless truths to be uncovered. There are no laws to be formulated. Contextual knowledge is probably more useful than generalised knowledge when formulating and carrying out complex educational policy or when carrying on the complicated business of teaching. For these purposes factual knowledge is less useful than qualities of understanding and wisdom. Stories made public and understood within the framework of individual experiences help cultivate these qualities. They show us other aspects of our world and in doing so illuminate our own small part of it. They help us question what we have taken for granted, to broaden our comprehension, and to deepen our insights.

6. Conclusions

My conclusion is Janus faced. I do not want to decry the usefulness of aid, degree programmes or academic publishing. Nor am I concerned to present another version of 'ground up cosmopolitanism' or of Held's regionally multipolar world order. Rather I am concerned to argue for an acknowledgement of the specific polarities within the interactions between those who can sell their knowledge or who are part of educational aid programmes, and those who buy it or are asked to accept what is offered through aid. Acknowledgement would require an explicit acceptance that knowledge constructed in one context is only partially fit for purpose in another. The social, material, topological, cultural, linguistic, historical, political context in any region is relevant in understanding how far any knowledge may be useful.

Personal narratives and other stories in educational research are also a way for the majority of the world to put the knowledge constructed in the West into its place: useful, but *only* insofar as it is relevant to the particular contexts at hand. Thus, stories, especially when presented as research, are an essential tool for developing countries in formulating their own solutions and resolutions to their own educational issues and problems. Such research does not require the extensive resource base that educational research enjoys in the richer parts of the world where educational research has been established – and funded – for decades. Moreover, knowledge expressed in stories seems to engage the memory and emotions in a way that drier modes of expression do not. It cannot be an accident that stories told in language, dance and song are found, repeated and enjoyed all over the world.

In the long run there might even be the happy possibility that Westerners' self-belief in their own rightness and universality might be shaken. As I remarked in Griffiths (2012) there are indications that those parts of the world, such as China or India, which are already presenting a challenge to Western economic dominance, are also challenging orthodox Western views about appropriate strategies in Higher Education policies (Griffiths, 2012). So, like Peters, I want to find ways of positioning educational research, theory and philosophy in a post-colonial world. Speaking of Australia and New Zealand he says (2013, n.p.):

> Here over 500 languages, 500 peoples and their works and ideas have hardly appeared in English philosophy journals. So we have an obligation to indigenous peoples… How do we make sense in an English speaking world, of Confucian societies, that have great respect for the scholar, with an English speaking world…To what extent can we collaborate and what will that mean for a world which is based on the concept of full participation in an educational society – one that demands an educational equality.

NOTES

1. See the useful overviews in Hansen (2010) and Strand (2010b).

2. Cavarero herself does not draw directly on Aristotle though she does use the term '*praxis*' in one of her quotations from Arendt.

3. As Williams points out the word, 'truth' is much more difficult to assess anyway, because the meaning of the term is itself hotly contested. Indeed this contest is signalled by the way 'truth' often appears in scare quotes in educational research literature. Whatever allegiance any individual researcher has to one or other definitions of 'truth', it is much easier to agree on truthfulness which is often all that it is necessary to establish in narrative (and other qualitative) research.

4. For example, They might be romantic (heroes and villains), epideictic (assigning praise or blame) or scientistic (expressing timeless universal truths from data).

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